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THE MINORITY OF ONE

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EDITOR M. S. ARNONI

May 16, 1966

Mr. Harold Weisberg
Coq d'Or Farm
Hyattstown, Md. 20734

Dear Mr. Weisberg:

Your book has reached me while I was bedridden; thus I immediately had an opportunity of browsing through it. Yes, I merely browsed, because much of the material is sufficiently well known to me to have enabled me to skip many of the detailed accounts of which I had been made aware before.

I want to respond to your invitation of comments, and I also wish to be friendly in this letter. But I shall not let my friendliness limit my comments.

I feel that you are much too conceited about your book. In itself this would be tolerable were it not that you also belittle others, unfairly and improperly. It is simply not true that "In two and a half years since that tragic day in Dallas... not a single publisher /has/ come out with a single substantial book." In my evaluation, there have been a number of such substantial books. If those which heretofore appeared have not been substantial, then yours could be considered such even less. For I have found your book, in the main, to be merely a reiteration of research, analysis and criticism by others. Instead of generously acknowledging their work and services you belittle them and then inexplicably by implication lay the claim to yours being the "definitive and responsible treatment of the subject..." Sir, it is absolutely nothing of the sort. There certainly seems to exist an inverse proportion between the praise you reserve for yourself and that which you dish out to others.

Your heroic account of the history of efforts to have your book published does not invoke my confidence. The fact of the matter is that a number of books--certainly no less substantial than yours--have been published on this subject. The fact of the matter is that for the end of June is scheduled the publication of what I have reason to believe an extremely significant book to be issued by a large publishing house. While I am aware that there are many publishers who would not touch the subject, primarily because they believe public interest to have significantly subsided, there are others who would and will. I also think that you are unaware of the big difference that exists between the American press and book publishing industry. While the former is extremely monolithic, as far as books are concerned my experience tells me that any book, whatever its subject and whatever its point of view, if only competently written, can be published by a legitimate American publisher. Taking all this into consideration, it is just possible that your inflated opinion of your own book somehow distorted your perception of the difficulties you encountered in publishing it. A further indication of this is found in your preface when you quote initial publishers' responses, prior to their manuscript reading, as if such responses could conceivably amount to commitments, and instead of speculating on what might have happened to those initial responses in the process of manuscript reading, you automatically construe the disappearance of their interest as proof of unethical considerations or what-not.

Many, if not all, of my above reservations would be undone if your book were truly a definitive work, if it hit one between one's eyes with the power of radically new material. Since, your self-evaluation notwithstanding, it does nothing of the sort, what under other circumstances might have been minor reservations become in your case major ones.

Last, I am going to ask you for something highly unusual: despite the fact that this letter is bound to displease you, please try, if you can, to consider it on merit.

Sincerely,

M. S. Arnoni

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Who Does Your Thinking?